



Brief Description of the Source and/or Background Information:

This vase is called an amphora. The wide mouth, handles and sturdy base made it perfect for storing wine or oil. While no freestanding paintings or murals survive from ancient Greece, thousands of existing painted vases like this one tell us about the period's important subject and style. The woman at the far left is looking at a box that normally holds jewelry or toiletries. The seated woman holds a barbiton, a lyre-like stringed instrument. A smaller lyre is suspended above her. On the right, facing the other figures stands a third woman holding double pipes. Another scene of three women holding pine branches and a torch appears on the other side of this vase. The painting on this vase represents another art important to the ancient Greeks, music. Evidence of many musical instruments and songs for family and community occasions demonstrates the central role the arts played in ancient Greece.

Both a potter and a painter created this vase. Potters lived next to each other in every ancient Greek town. They threw clay on wheels and fired it in kilns just like potters do today. One of the prominent vase painters in Classical Athens, known as the Niobid Painter, created this vase. His work is characterized by quiet, natural looking figures that make up simple, balanced compositions.

Guiding Questions to Help Analyze the Source:

1. Look carefully at this work of art. How do you think it was used? What makes you say that?
2. Why do you think this vase or amphora is important?
3. What does the image on this amphora tell us about ancient Greek life?
4. How do you think this amphora was created?
5. If you could create an amphora from a scene from your life, what would you include and why? If an archaeologist found your amphora 100 years from now, what could they learn about your life?

How does this source help you understand how historians use objects and artifacts to describe the past?